

NIEHS WETP Awardee Meeting

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Designing Training To Build Cultural Competency



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OVERVIEW, Part One

- Develop A Shared Understanding About:
 - Culture and how it functions in our lives
 - How culture-based assumptions lead to stereotypes
 - The impact of stereotypes in the workplace – the vicious circle
 - Issues for employee development and career management



OVERVIEW, Part Two

- Building Cultural Competency Through Training
 - Who needs cultural competency skills?
 - Importance of experiential, adult learning approaches
 - Setting up a safe learning climate
 - Phase one: **Building Awareness** of the issues and their impact
 - Phase two: **Building Cultural Competency Skills**
 - Phase three: **Ongoing Support and Follow-Up**



CULTURE

- What is Culture?:
 - *“The ideas, customs, habits, skills, arts, etc. of a people or group that are transferred, communicated, or passed along, as in or to succeeding generations.”* —Webster’s Dictionary
- How Does Culture Show up?
 - language, dress, mannerisms, beliefs, foods, religious practices, concepts of time, attitudes, responses to authority, social interactions, decision-making styles, family roles, work styles, etc.



CULTURE

- What does culture do for you?
 - Tells you the unwritten “rules”
 - Gives you a sense of belonging
 - Gives a sense of comfort and competence in human interactions
 - Instills a sense of pride and of being special
 - **HELPS YOU KNOW HOW TO WIN THE APPROVAL OF OTHERS!**
 - Approval builds a sense of self worth and self-esteem



CULTURE ...

- Is often invisible to members of the culture
- Is not always based on ethnicity
 - Profession, gender, age, region, education, economics, etc.
- Is a layered phenomenon
- Provides a “shorthand” based on assumptions
- Inter-cultural contact creates stereotypes



STEREOTYPES

- What are Stereotypes?
 - *“A fixed or conventional notion or conception of a person or group held by a number of people and allowing for no individuality, critical judgment, etc”.* – Webster’s Dictionary
- Stereotypes are a function of cultural-centrism – a natural human condition
- It is not possible to live in a multi-cultural environment without developing stereotypes
- Stereotypes can influence our behavior in unconscious ways
- The comfort-competence link



Stereotypes In The Workplace: The Vicious Circle

**Something in my
unconscious behavior
triggers your stereotypes
of my “group”**



**Your unconscious
response triggers
my stereotypes of
your “group”**



**Your subsequent
behaviors reinforce my
stereotypes of your
“group”**



**My subsequent behaviors
and attitudes reinforce
your stereotypes about
my “group”**



Issues for Employee Development and Career Management

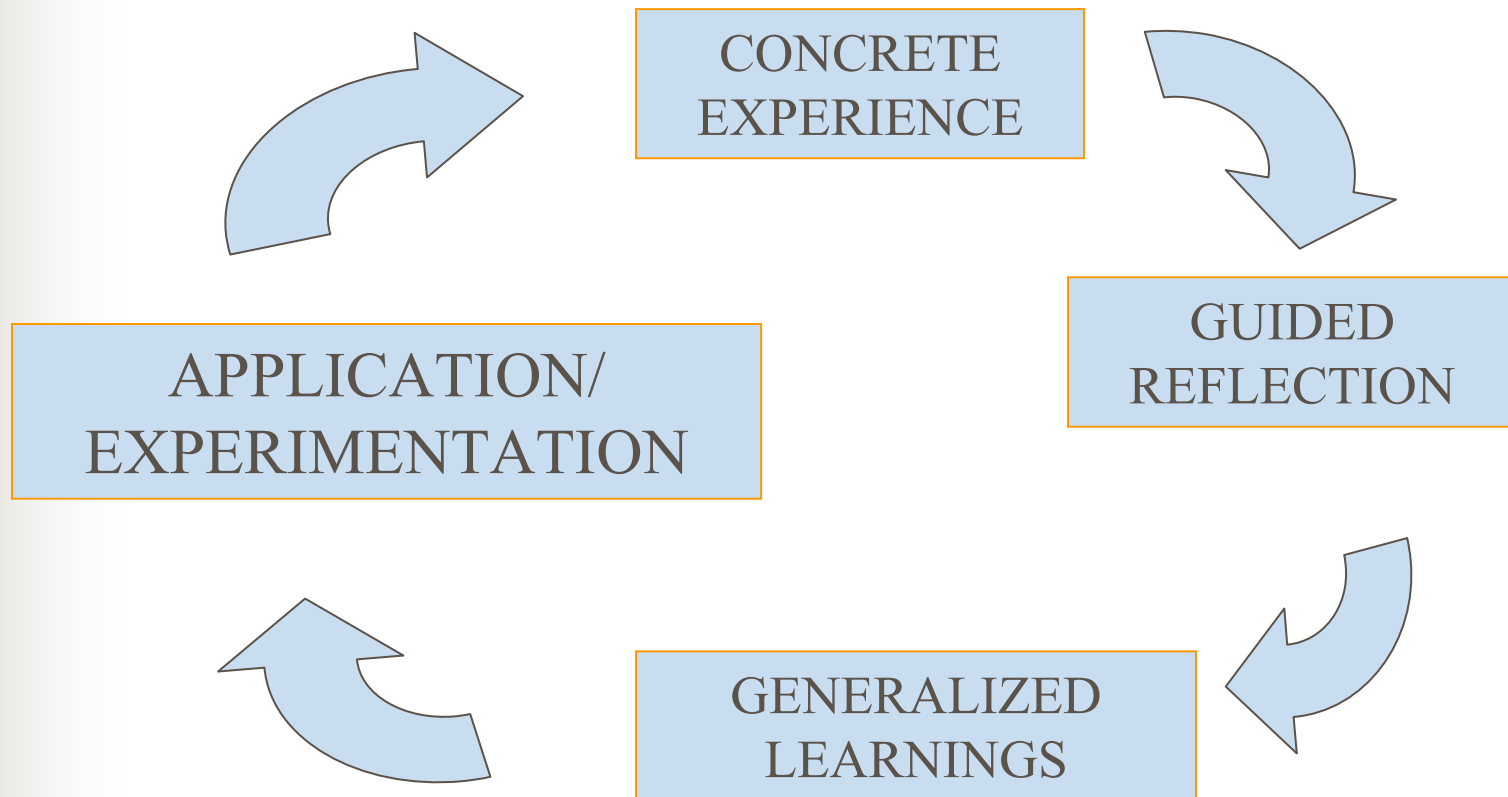
- Undercurrents of stress and tension
 - Guilty until proven innocent
 - Managers develop “as-if ” relationships
- Less developmental feedback is given
- Reduced focus on skills and competencies
- More focus on attitudes and behaviors
- Creates a negative self-fulfilling prophecy
- Rising accusations and defensiveness
- Ethno-centrism is seen as racism



Building Cultural Competency Through Training

- Who needs cultural competency skills?
- Keep focus on work-related career/life skills NOT on making someone a “better” human being
- Create a safe and value-neutral climate
- Use active and interactive training modules
- To build skills: Follow the Experiential Learning Model

The Experiential Learning Cycle





Plan For Successful Training

- If you do not have adequate internal resources, bring in an outside expert
- Train and Certify your trainers!
- Design your training with your audience and their work environment in mind
- Remember that there is a difference between Awareness Building and Skill Building